

Management Prescriptions
Multiple Use and Transfer Areas

Box Canyon is very scenic and is a unique natural area. It has been evaluated for eligibility for national natural landmark designation. Future resource uses and proposals would be closely examined to prevent degradation of scenic quality and naturalness. No surface occupancy associated with mineral lease development would be allowed.

An activity plan would be prepared to guide management of the unique resources of the area. This plan would include provisions to protect habitat for the Shoshone sculpin and the Bliss Rapids snail.

The area would be open to ORV use. ORV use in the general area is light and is not expected to be a problem in Box Canyon.

The area would be given priority for fire suppression in the fire management plan and would be under full fire suppression.

L8-Little Wood River SRMA - 2,787 acres

The riparian habitat and fishery of this area would be maintained or improved to support quality sport fishing opportunities. This would be done by excluding livestock from most of the streamside area. Most of the fencing to accomplish this has already been completed. Management emphasis would be placed on assuring the fencing is maintained to protect the streambank. A recreation activity management plan would be prepared for the area. The area would be open to ORV use.

L9-Snake River Rim SRMA - 5,102 acres

This area would be managed to provide for a wide variety of recreation activities including rifle shooting, archery, motorcycle riding/racing, picnicking, sightseeing, and float-boating, while resolving conflicts among various uses and protecting cultural resources and fragile soils. The demand for these activities is expected to increase as is the potential for user conflicts.

Sub-area L9a, 345 acres in Devil's Corral, would be closed to ORV use to protect cultural resources and soils. The remaining 4,757 acres would be open to ORV use.

Sub-areas L9a and L9d, totalling 1,159 acres, lie within the proposed Dry Cataracts National Natural Landmark. Geologic formations associated with the Bonneville Flood, including alluvial gravel deposits, would be protected from human disturbances that would degrade their naturalness. Mineral material sales or free use would be prohibited.

Sub-area L9e, 374 acres, would be managed for protection, maintenance, and enhancement of wildlife habitat. These tracts are included in the existing Isolated Tracts HMP and would be covered by the revised HMP prepared for L11 areas in this proposed RMP.

Livestock grazing would not be restricted by recreation oriented management in L9.

The existing Snake River Rim Recreation Area Management Plan would be revised to reflect changes from existing ORV designations, acreage within the Snake River Rim SRMA, transfer area designations, float-boating management, protection of geologic formations associated with the Bonneville Flood in sub-areas L9a and L9d, and wildlife management on sub-area L9e.

A cultural resource management plan would be prepared for Devil's Corral (L9a). This plan would specify the degree of protection and the interpretive measures appropriate for the area. Fire suppression guidelines to limit surface disturbance would be developed and incorporated into the fire management plan.

L10-Cedar Fields SRMA - 2,240 acres

This area would be managed to provide a variety of recreation activities including ORV use, sport fishing, and river floating; to maintain or enhance wildlife habitat; and to protect scenic quality, fragile soils, and cultural resources.

ORV use would be limited in the area, but restrictions would be applied only where significant damage to high quality and highly visible scenic areas, fragile soils, significant wildlife values, and significant cultural resources is occurring. ORV use in sub-area L10a (395 acres) would be limited to designated trails consistent with Bureau of Reclamation limitations on adjacent lands. Livestock grazing and minerals activities would not be restricted by recreation oriented management in the area.

A recreation activity management plan and a cultural resources management plan specifying the degree of protection and interpretive measures appropriate for the area would be prepared. These plans would include fire suppression guidelines designed to protect fragile soils and cultural resources by limiting surface disturbance.

L11-Isolated Tracts - 10,551 acres

These tracts would be managed for protection, maintenance, and enhancement of wildlife habitat, primarily for upland game birds. These tracts are

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existing Isolated Tracts of high or medium value or potential Isolated Tracts of high value as determined in the Analysis of the Management Situation for the Monument Planning Area.

The existing Isolated Tracts HMP would be revised to reflect changes in the number of tracts. Sub-area L9e, would also be covered by the revised HMP. The modified HMP would include fire suppression guidelines for protection of wildlife habitat on Isolated Tracts.

Livestock would be excluded from 821 acres of Isolated Tracts by fencing.

The areas would be given priority for fire suppression in the fire management plan and would be under full fire suppression. The area would remain open to ORV use.

L12-Areas of Geologic Interest - 6,996 acres.

These areas would be managed to preserve fragile geologic formations associated with caves. They contain the most natural caves outside of WSAs recommended suitable for wilderness designation. All proposed projects would be examined to ensure the formations are not adversely affected. No surface occupancy associated with mineral lease development would be allowed within 250 feet of fragile geologic formations or caves. To avoid possible adverse effects from increased public exposure, such as vandalism and removal of speleothems, access to caves would not be improved. The areas would remain open to ORV use.

A cave management plan would be prepared for these areas. This would include fire suppression guidelines to limit surface disturbance near the geologic formations.

T1-Transfer - 20,538 acres

These areas would be available for transfer from Federal ownership. Transfer could be by sale, exchange, agricultural entry or other means determined appropriate as discussed on pages 42 and 43. Detailed examination would be conducted for these tracts prior to the final decision about transfer or type of transfer. Examinations would consider threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, and other resource values. Agricultural entry applications and other transfer proposals for these areas would be considered in the order received.

The criteria used to select parcels for inclusion in T1 for the proposed Monument RMP are presented on pages 2-35 and 2-36 of the final EIS.

T2-Transfer-Agricultural Entry - 29,873 acres

These areas would be available for transfer from Federal ownership under the agricultural land laws or for local and State government needs or exchange. Other types of transfers may occur only if agricultural entry transfers leave parcels in Federal ownership that are difficult to manage because of odd configuration, access problems, or lack of adequate facilities (fences, cattle-guards, water, etc.). These resulting difficult-to-manage tracts could be transferred from Federal ownership by sale, exchange, or other means as determined appropriate as discussed under T1. T2 areas found to be unsuitable for transfer under agricultural land laws and not falling into the T1 category as described in the preceding sentence would remain in public ownership and be managed as described for M1 areas.

Studies to determine suitability under the agricultural land laws include economic feasibility, physical suitability for agriculture, water availability, threatened and endangered species clearance, and cultural resources clearance.

In some cases, small parcels adjacent to agricultural applications were included in T2 if transfer of the application would make the small adjacent parcel difficult to manage as described above.

Up to 25 percent of the T2 areas could be retained in public ownership and managed as L11 areas under the Isolated Tracts HMP. Criteria to be used in selecting these areas are listed under "Standard Operating Procedures" in this proposed RMP. The areas would be selected on a case-by-case basis as T2 lands are considered for transfer.

The criteria used to select parcels for inclusion in T2 for the proposed Monument RMP are presented on pages 2-36 and 2-37 of the final EIS.

T3-Jerome County Canyon Rim Transfer - 258 acres

This area would be available for transfer from Federal ownership as described for T1, but only if zoning regulations were changed to allow commercial or residential development.

Parcels were included in T3 for the same reasons as discussed for T1.

T4-Bureau of Reclamation Transfer - 3,751 acres

These lands would be withdrawn for the Minidoka North Side Pumping Division Extension Project and developed for irrigated farmland by the Bureau of Reclamation. Developed lands would be transferred from Federal ownership by

the Bureau of Reclamation. Approximately half of the area would be retained by the Bureau of Reclamation for wildlife and recreation management. Existing agricultural entry applications would be processed prior to withdrawal.

These are lands that are compatible with this project.

Other Resource Uses

Fire Management

Portions of the planning area, totaling 181,086 acres, would be under full fire suppression. Vineyard Creek ACEC (L6) and Box Canyon ACEC (L7) would be under full suppression to protect the naturalness and scenic quality of the areas. The Substation Tract ACEC would be under full suppression to protect natural vegetation communities. The Isolated Tracts (L11) and Pronghorn Winter Range HMP area (discussed below under Wildlife Habitat) would be under full suppression to protect the vegetation, primarily brush, important to wildlife habitat management objectives. The areas discussed above would also be given priority for fire suppression in the fire management plan.

The remainder of the planning area would be covered by a limited suppression plan. The purpose of this plan would be to more efficiently use fire suppression funds. However, since the planning area is subject to large fires, limited suppression would only take place when the burning index is below 22. This would typically require full suppression during July and August. Large, repeated fires cannot be tolerated from the wildlife habitat and soil erosion standpoint.

The General Fire Suppression Guidelines, presented later in this proposed RMP under "Standard Operating Procedures," would apply to most of the planning area. Exceptions to these would occur in portions of the planning area totalling at least 278,336 acres. ^{1/} Surface disturbing equipment would be more likely to be used in Isolated Tracts (L11), Pronghorn Winter Range HMP areas (see Map 15 in the final EIS), and brush protection areas to protect the vegetation, primarily brush, important to wildlife habitat management objectives. Surface disturbing equipment would also be more likely to be used in the Substation Tract ACEC to protect natural vegetation communities. On the other hand, use of surface disturbing equipment would be very limited in WSAs recommended suitable (L1) to protect wilderness character, in Cedar Fields SRMA (L10) to protect fragile soils and cultural resources, in the Oregon Trail area and Devil's Corral (L9a) to protect cultural resources, and in the

^{1/} The acreage involved in the brush protection areas and the Oregon Trail area is unknown at this time and would be determined in detailed examinations.

Areas of Geologic Interest (L12) to protect fragile geologic formations. Guidelines for fire suppression in the above areas would be included in the fire management plan.

Prescribed fire could be used as a tool for accomplishing the 19,000 acres of brush control proposed under Livestock Forage. The guidelines for prescribed fire presented later in this proposed RMP under "Standard Operating Procedures" would apply. The use of prescribed fire in areas other than those proposed for brush control would be allowed only if found to be environmentally acceptable through consideration of environmental effects in the NEPA process. Such use could include projects such as noxious weed abatement or habitat management not foreseen at this time.

Prescribed fire would not be used in Substation Tract ACEC (L4), Vineyard Creek ACEC (L6), or Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs ACEC (L7).

One hundred miles of roads would be maintained annually to improve access for fire suppression forces and provide secure fuel breaks that could be used for firelines. This would cost approximately \$10,000 annually. The roads to be maintained are presently very rough and/or infrequently used. Vegetation growing in the roadways limits their usefulness as fire lines. The objective of this road maintenance is to help suppression crews keep fires smaller. This would benefit the wildlife habitat and soil erosion situation greatly.

Roads would be maintained in Fire Ecology Zones 1, 2, and 3 (see Map 6 in the final EIS). These areas have a high potential for frequent burns. Improved access and fuel breaks in these areas would help fire suppression efforts greatly.

Although other management practices to reduce wildfire size and occurrence are not proposed, they could be considered in the future as availability and effectiveness are demonstrated. Such practices might include seeding of fire resistant plant species in strips. The environmental effects of any such practices would be considered in the NEPA process before the practices could be implemented.

Wildlife Habitat

Several wildlife habitat objectives have been covered under the discussion of multiple use areas. Habitat objectives for the hybrid trout are covered under L6-Vineyard Creek ACEC; for the Shoshone sculpin, they are covered under L7-Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs ACEC; for the Bliss Rapids snail, they are covered under both L6 and L7; for ring-necked pheasant and gray partridge (upland game birds), they are covered under L11-Isolated Tracts. The discussion in Fire Management above specifies actions that would benefit wildlife. Following is a discussion of other wildlife habitat objectives for the proposed Monument RMP.

Brush areas valuable to wildlife would be given priority for fire suppression in the fire management plan. Specific areas of importance would be

Other Resource Uses

identified in detailed examinations and development of HMPs discussed below. Guidelines for fire suppression would be developed and incorporated into the fire management plan. Protection of brush pockets would be important in maintaining or enhancing habitat for sage grouse, pronghorn, mule deer, and non-game wildlife. It should be noted that areas of brush valuable to wildlife would likely change over time as some brush stands are burned by wildfire while others recover.

Artificial nest structures would be constructed for the ferruginous hawk, Swainson's hawk, and burrowing owl to increase populations. Specific numbers and locations of these structures would be determined in detailed examination of habitat suitable for each species. Ferruginous hawk nest structures would be placed in remote areas. Swainson's hawk nest structures would be placed on Isolated Tracts (L11). Burrowing owl nest boxes would be placed primarily on Isolated Tracts, but also throughout the breeding range.

A Sage Grouse HMP would be prepared to guide management in the sage grouse winter habitat area covering about 67,000 acres (see Map 7 in the final EIS). Objectives of this HMP would be to maintain and enhance sage grouse habitat by maintaining adequate, suitable areas of brush and providing additional forbs for brood rearing. Suitable forbs would be included in range seedings in this area. Guidelines for fire suppression to protect brush would be developed and incorporated into the fire management plan.

A Pronghorn Winter Range HMP would be prepared for approximately 171,000 acres shown on Map 15 in the final EIS. Objectives of this HMP would be to improve winter habitat for pronghorn by protecting valuable brush stands and increasing the brush component of the areas. Detailed examination would be required to determine the specific areas most important to the wintering animals. The possibility of seeding brush or fire resistant plant species would be examined for feasibility. Guidelines for fire suppression to protect brush would be developed and incorporated into the fire management plan.

A Pronghorn Summer Range HMP would be prepared for 60,000 acres in the Wildhorse Allotment. Objectives of this HMP would be to improve summer habitat for pronghorn by maintaining adequate areas of brush, providing additional forbs, and providing new water sources. Suitable forbs would be included in range seedings in this area. Guidelines for providing additional water sources would be developed. Guidelines for fire suppression to protect brush would be developed and incorporated into the fire management plan.

Livestock Forage

Provide 142,879 AUMs of livestock forage. Approximately 858,043 acres of public land would be included in grazing allotments (see Maps 1 and 9). Average stocking rate would be 6.0 acres per AUM.

The objectives would be to maintain existing perennial forage plants, maintain soil stability, stabilize areas currently in downward trend, and increase availability of perennial forage plants.

The following range improvements would be accomplished in support of achieving the objectives stated above.

25,500 acres of reseeding
19,000 acres of brush control
54 miles of fencing
74 miles of pipeline
110 water troughs
9 wells
24 cattleguards
4 miles of road construction

Total cost of improvements = \$1,602,800
20-year maintenance and replacement cost = \$669,200

The criteria used to determine the stocking level and range improvements are presented on pages 2-40 and 2-41 in the final EIS.

The initial stocking level for Alternative C would be 149,135 AUMs (present active preference). Adjustments toward the proposed preference, 142,879 AUMs, would occur based on monitoring data as discussed later in this proposed RMP under "Implementation." Increases dependent on range improvements would occur only as funding for the necessary improvements is available and the projects are completed. Range improvement guidelines are included in "Standard Operating Procedures." Decreases in livestock stocking resulting from land transfers would occur only as the identified tracts are transferred from Federal ownership.

No changes in season of livestock use are proposed. This is because no resource conflicts were identified that would be resolved by such changes. However, changes in season of livestock use could be made in the future after considering environmental effects in the NEPA process if supported by monitoring.

New AMPs or CRMPs would be developed for nine allotments. This would bring the total area covered to 97 percent of the allotted acres.

It is estimated that 21,910 sheep AUMs would be converted to cattle AUMs. Actual conversion would be consistent with the Shoshone District Conversion Policy. The assumed conversion is based on the following assumptions.

1. 50 percent conversion of spring sheep preference to cattle preference would be allowed in allotments without conversion guidelines in existing AMPs.
2. Fall sheep preference would not be converted to cattle preference unless an existing AMP specifies otherwise.
3. Conversion guidelines in existing AMPs would be followed.
4. The maximum conversion allowed by the factors listed above would occur.

Cultural Resources

In addition to the Cultural Resource Management Plans discussed for Devil's Corral (L9a) and the Cedar Fields SRMA (L10), two other plans would be prepared; one for the Oregon Trail and one for Wilson Butte Cave. These plans would specify the degree of protection and the interpretation measures appropriate for the areas. In the case of the Oregon Trail, fire suppression guidelines to limit surface disturbance would be developed and incorporated into the fire management plan.

Soils

Several actions have been discussed which would help meet the objective of keeping soil erosion within tolerable levels. ORV use would be restricted in portions of the Snake River Rim SRMA (L9) and in the Cedar Fields SRMA to protect fragile soils. Fires would be given full suppression when the burning index is above 22 to help protect soils. Road maintenance would be conducted in key areas to help keep fires smaller, thus helping to protect soils. Fire suppression guidelines to limit surface disturbance would be developed for the Cedar Fields SRMA.

In addition to the actions listed above, areas with severe erosion problems would be stabilized. At the present time, 150 acres of active sand dunes in the Lake Walcott area have been identified for a seeding project to stabilize the dunes. Other areas would be treated as they are identified, provided treatment would be feasible.

Priority would be given to emergency treatment of severe erosion areas caused by wildfire.

Summary of Activity Plans Required for Implementation of the Proposed Monument RMP

Two Wilderness Management Plans (excluding Great Rift)
- One for each WSA recommended suitable.

One ORV Designation Implementation Plan
- Detailing how the ORV designations for the planning area would be implemented including public awareness, signing, and enforcement.

Three ACEC management plans
- One for each ACEC.

Three Recreation Activity Management Plans (RAMPs)

- One for each special recreation management area (SRMA)

Four Habitat Management Plans (HMPs)

- One would be a revision of the Isolated Tracts HMP.
- The others would be prepared for pronghorn winter range, pronghorn summer range, and sage grouse winter habitat.

Four Cultural Resource Management Plans

- One each for Devil's Corral, Cedar Fields, Wilson Butte Cave, and the Oregon Trail.

One Cave Management Plan

- For the L12 areas (Areas of Geologic Interest).

Nine AMPs, CRMPs, or other appropriate plans

- One for each of the nine allotments specified under "Implementation."

One Limited Fire Suppression Plan

The fire management plan will include guidelines to

- limit surface disturbance in WSAs recommended suitable, Cedar Fields SRMA, the Oregon Trail, and Areas of Geologic Interest.
- protect vegetation valuable to wildlife on Isolated Tracts, Pronghorn Winter Range HMP area, and brush protection areas.
- protect the naturalness and scenic quality of Vineyard Creek ACEC and Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs ACEC.
- protect the natural vegetation communities of the Substation Tract ACEC.

Some of the activity plans listed above may be consolidated into a single plan where two or more activities have activity plan needs in the same general area.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the proposed Monument RMP would be accomplished over a period of several years. The BLM budgeting process would influence the exact implementation schedule for nearly all resource management activities. Activity plans would be developed as funding allows. New policy or departmental guidance may influence priorities.

The monitoring plan shown in Appendix A of the final EIS specifies a five-year interval for monitoring implementation of the RMP. If monitoring